

Tessa Burpee
Brewer

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and Members of the Committee on State & Local Government,

My name is Tessa Burpee and I live in Brewer. I am writing in support of several bills that will require our state legislature to approve and extend a state of emergency and limit the governor's emergency powers:

LD 14, An Act to Require a Two-thirds Vote to Extend a State of Emergency

LD 131, An Act to Amend the Governor's Emergency Powers

LD 608, An Act Regarding the Governor's Emergency Powers

LD 980, An Act to Establish Balance in the Governor's Emergency Powers

LD 1019, An Act to Promote Transparent Emergency Management

LD 1220, An Act to Require a Two-thirds Vote of the Legislature Every 2 Weeks to Maintain a State of Emergency Declared by the Governor

Maine citizens have not been represented in our state's response to the covid pandemic for nearly one year. The governor has acted alone to declare and extend the state of emergency, without input from the legislature. By extending the emergency, she has also granted herself the ability to make all decisions about the handling of the pandemic (issuing mandates, deeming some businesses non-essential, restricting the rights of citizens, etc.) without the input of those who represent us. It is a very dangerous thing for one person to wield so much power. It flies in the face of the Maine Constitution and everything the founders of our great country set forth: a government of the people, by the people, for the people. We must have checks and balances. Surely, if the party lines were reversed, a majority of our current legislators would quickly see the problem with a Republican governor giving himself or herself such unchecked power.

The proposed legislation seeks to restore the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches, which are designed to be co-equal and accountable to each other and the Maine people. It should be a no-brainer in our representative democracy that our representatives would represent us during an emergency! Needs vary across the state and our representatives need to weigh in on what is best for their constituents, have discussion and come up with solutions.

By requiring the legislature to approve a state of emergency and placing limits on the governor's authority during an emergency, the proposed legislation will prevent abuse of power and restore representative government.

These bills will protect Maine people and prevent the balance of power from tipping in favor of any governor - present or future and regardless of political affiliation.

Please vote "ought to pass" on these bills.

Respectfully,
Tessa Burpee